

# Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System —BRFSS

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a state-based health survey that annually collects information on a range of issues including health conditions, risk behaviors, and preventive practices. BRFSS data are used to:

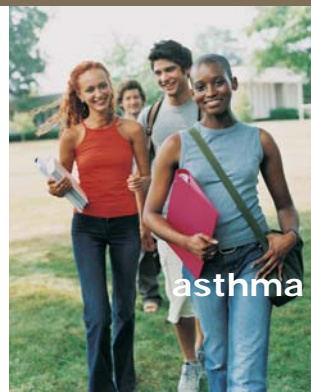
- identify emerging health problems,
- establish health objectives and track their progress,
- develop and evaluate public health policies and programs, and
- justify funding requests and report progress for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant and chronic disease programs.

State health departments conduct the annual BRFSS with assistance and support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Telephone interviews are conducted with non-institutionalized adults aged 18 and older using a standardized questionnaire.

States forward the anonymous, de-identified responses to CDC where the data are aggregated and state prevalences are calculated for each question. In Missouri, sufficient numbers of responses are obtained to also report prevalences for seven regions in the state including the Kansas City and St. Louis metropolitan regions.

BRFSS interviews are conducted through random-digit-dialed (RDD) telephone interviews using standardized protocols and interviewing techniques developed by the CDC. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services maintains a contract with the University of Missouri-Columbia Health and Behavioral Risk Research Center to conduct the interviews

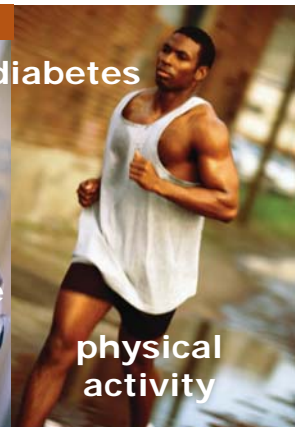
In 2009, Missouri began conducting interviews with randomly selected cellular telephone only users. This methodology was added to reduce the potential for bias in coverage created by the increasing number of households that use only cell telephones and no longer use a landline telephone. In 2010, Missouri and all states are expected to begin mailing paper surveys to non-respondents of the telephone interview. This is expected to increase the overall response rate of the survey.



asthma



high blood pressure



diabetes

physical activity



arthritis

stroke



immunizations



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In Missouri,  
approximately 5,300  
adults are interviewed  
annually throughout the  
year.

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## What data are collected?

The annual BRFSS questionnaire includes a set of core questions that CDC requires all states to ask. The states' data are then compared to other states, as well as to an overall average for the United States. The annual questionnaire also includes a set of optional modules that states may choose to ask. Programs may request that a related module be asked and provide funding to cover the cost of collecting the data. State-specific questions may also be added by states to address local issues or topics not covered by CDC questions. The following are examples of data obtained through the annual BRFSS.

### Percent of Missouri adults that:

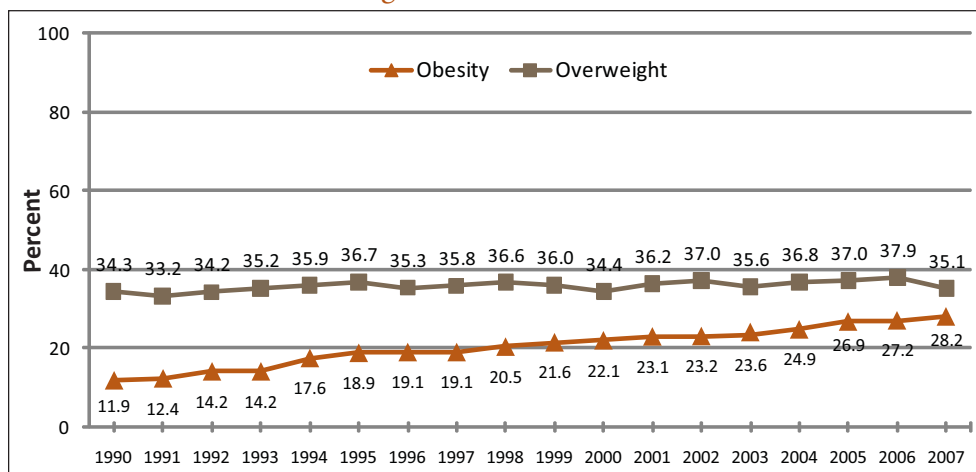
- Disease/Conditions - Have ever been told by a health professional they had asthma, arthritis, diabetes, cancer, coronary heart disease, a heart attack, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or a stroke.
- Risk Factors - Smoke cigarettes, had no leisure time physical activity in past month, ate less than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day during the past month, are overweight, are obese, never use a seatbelt, or have driven after having had too much alcohol to drink.
- Health Care Access - Have no health care coverage, needed to see a doctor in the past 12 months but couldn't due to cost, or have never had a routine checkup by a doctor.
- Preventive Practices - In the past year had a flu shot, visited a dentist, were screened for colorectal cancer, women had a clinical breast exam, mammogram or Pap test, or men had a PSA test.
- Mental/Emotional - Are limited in activities because of a physical, mental or emotional problem, do not receive the social and emotional support needed, experience anxiety, depression, or mental illness.
- Health Knowledge and Care Management - Know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack or stroke, or take measures to control and manage their diabetes.

## How are data reported?

BRFSS data are reported on the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Web site at <http://cntysvr1.lphamo.org/pubdocs/brfss/index.php>. Annual reports that include regional data may be found on the Data and Statistical Reports page.

BRFSS data are also reported in program specific documents, including various chronic disease burden or annual reports. Figure 1 is an example of how BRFSS data are reported to demonstrate an emerging health issue over time. The graphic is from the *Missouri Diabetes Burden Report and State Plan*, February 2009.

Figure 1. Trend of prevalence (%) of obesity and overweight among adults, Missouri, 1990-2007



The obesity prevalence in 2008 was 29.1 percent.